

DIALOGWEB

Guided Search

new search

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Dynamic Search: Gale Group Trade & Industry Database(TM)

Records for: **online and consumer and reports**

save as alert...

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Output

Format: Full Record

Output as: Browser

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05486476 Supplier Number: 11367536 (THIS IS THE FULL TEXT)

Driving a hard bargain; armed with online ammunition, you can get a better price for a new or used car.

Fryxell, David A.

Link-Up , v8 , n5 , p18(2)

Sept-Oct , 1991

ISSN: 0739-988X

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Text:

Driving a Hard Bargain

Armed with **online** ammunition, you can get a better price for a new or used car.

It wasn't exactly the normal way to buy a car--no dreamy weeks of visiting auto showrooms, taking test drives ad infinitum, or poring over glossy brochures. No, we needed a new car and we needed it fast. I was about to embark on a new job in a new city, where I'd be on my own for a month--without my family and without the family car. Renting a car for that long was outrageous, and would still leave me with a long-term transportation problem.

So I did the only thing a right-thinking car shopper would do: I plugged in my modem and went **online**.

A few taps on the keyboard and I was into CompuServe's **online** edition of **Consumer Reports** magazine's auto evaluations (Go Crauto). First, I checked a listing of all the cars recommended by **Consumer Reports**. Next, a series of menus helped narrow the database options to the kind of car I had in mind--a small, fuel-efficient car that wouldn't break my budget. I honed in on those that were also on the "recommended" list. Finally, I read--and saved for reference--the full **reports** on a half-dozen cars that sounded most promising. At \$1 a shot, it seemed a worthwhile investment in order to make a better multi-thousand-dollar decision.

While on CompuServe, I also steered over to Magazine Database Plus (Go Magdb). Searching the database by keyword was a snap, since I already knew exactly what I was looking for; it wasn't likely that "Toyota Corolla" or "Geo Prizm" would retrieve many useless hits. What I did retrieve was a wealth of in-depth auto evaluations from Car & Driver magazine on exactly the models I had in mind. At 25 cents a minute and \$1.50 for each full-text

report, the research cost me about \$12--another sound investment, I figured.

Finally, armed with sheafs of printouts from my **online** research, I went car shopping. By the end of the afternoon, I'd made a pretty darned good deal on a red, four-door Toyota Corolla, even getting the salesman to throw in the air conditioning gratis.

What a dope I was!

As I've since discovered, I barely scratched the surface of all the money-saving auto advice available **online**. If I'd stayed **online** a little longer, I probably could have had that car salesman on his knees, begging me to take a Mercedes for the price of my Corolla!

Fortunately, that's an oversight you don't have to make. If you know where to look, you can learn more **online** about cars than Mario Andretti ever knew, and have better bargaining information than Lee Iacocca.

Beyond evaluations

For starters, you can tap specialized auto-industry news that lets you know what Detroit (or Tokyo!) has in store for consumers. Dow Jones News/Retrieval, for example, has auto-industry news under its //Djnews section (.I/Aut). DataTimes' Business Library (Biz) includes back issues of Automotive Engineering (Aute), Automotive Industries (Auti), Motor Age (Mota), and Ward's Auto World (Waw) from January 1989 on.

You can also get information straight from the horsepower's mouth. Buick (Go Bu), Ford (Go Ford), and Nissan Motors (Go Ni) all have "kiosks" in CompuServe's Electronic Mall, where you can read the latest self-promotion, order or simply download brochures, buy or borrow videotapes, locate your nearest dealer, and even get special software that plugs their products. Ford data is also available via Genie (Ford).

Automotive RoundTable

But if you really want to get the low-down on a car you're thinking of buying--new, used, almost any kind of car--just delve a little deeper. Spend a few hours, for example, tapping the assembled automotive expertise of Genie's Automotive RoundTable (Auto). Here you'll find layer after layer of auto buffs and car talk, an almost inexhaustible trove of ideas and information about the horseless carriage.

After a basic introductory housekeeping (garagekeeping?) section, the BBS drives into a calendar of racing events for autos both new and old. Next is an area for enthusiasts of "historic and vintage" cars: Hudsons, Opel GTs, Studebakers, Nashes and Ramblers, Checker cabs, Crosley station wagons, Plymouth Barracudas--even the "unsafe-at-any-speed" Corvair of Ralph Nader ignominy. You'll find an **online** repair book for the '66 Buick and tips on finding parts for aged Corvettes.

The fourth BBS category is "Ask the Mechanic"--a perfect place to check out that used car/potential lemon before it's too late. When I looked in, there were 51 topics underway, ranging from "Pinging" to "Renault it or not." Next come sections on cars and the law ("Traffic Court"), "Inside Detroit," more mechanical advice in "Barney's Shade-tree Garage," amateur racing, and trucks.

Probably the most useful area of the BBS to potential car buyers is the model-by-model owners area that starts in Category 10. From Chevys to Rolls-Royces, if you're interested in a model there's a forum where you can ask folks who drive them. Then you can skip ahead to category 14 for more specific product and vehicle reviews. And there's even a "Swap Meet," back in category 12, where maybe you can find the car deal of your dreams.

New Car Showroom

Otherwise, before you head off to the showroom, you might also want to visit CompuServe's own New Car Showroom (Go Newcar)--kind of an electronic version of an auto dealership, with all the models rolled into one spot and no overeager salesmen. Here, you'll find the facts on more than 950 passenger cars, vans, special-purpose vehicles, and light trucks. You can read a single report for 90 cents, or compare two models side-by-side for \$1.20; facts and figures include everything from options to mileage to, of course, price.

If you still don't know what car you should choose, you can let the New Car Showroom do the shopping for you. Option four on its main menu lets you specify a price range, EPA classification (e.g., subcompact),

fuel-economy range, and other attributes; then you get a list of all the cars that meet your criteria. The tab for this service runs \$40, but it still might beat wandering all over town in search of your dream car.

Finally, once you've made a choice, you can ask the Showroom to calculate your likely monthly payment. If you don't say "ouch" too loudly, maybe the motor matchmaker has done a good job.

Autoquot-r

Even so, once you've evaluated the zillions of cars to choose from and narrowed your list, you'll want to turn your attention to minimizing sticker shock. **Online** information can help you with this wheeling-and-dealing phase, too. Basically, the "inside information" available comes down to getting a feel for what the dealer had to pay for the car you want--so you have the ammo, once you step into the showroom, to shoot down the sticker price. For used cars--as well as your own possible trade-in--the story is similar: **Online**, you can access guides and electronic "Blue Books" that tell you how much a used car with such-and-such features and so-much mileage ought to bring. It's the same data any car salesperson has at his or her fingertips; **online**, you can even the odds at negotiation time.

Autoquot-r, available both on CompuServe (Go Aq) and Genie (Autoquot-r), arms you with the dealer invoice cost for the new car of your choice, from Acura to Yugo. You can also get used-car valuations for any model from 1975 to the present. For \$14.95, you get:

- * A comprehensive description showing standard and optional equipment, with options broken down into categories.

- * EPA mileage ratings.

- * Warranty information.

- * Dealer invoice cost and average percentage markup.

- * **Consumer** and factory-to-dealer incentives in effect.

Want a cellular phone in your new car? Autoquot-r will tell you how much that perk will boost your bill. Have a favorite color in mind? You can find out whether it's available (limited only by the descriptive powers of those who come up with the crazy names for these colors). **Reports** are mailed by the next business day, or you can have them faxed to you for an additional \$1.95 per page.

Auto Vantage

AutoVantage, available on Delphi (Autovantage) and Genie (Cars), lets you access much the same information, along with membership privileges reminiscent of an auto club. Trial memberships run just \$1 for three months.

Shoppingwise, AutoVantage offers new-car summaries of specifications and features, options, and the usual dealer-invoice and sticker data. You can also check out a list of pros and cons of each model, road-test highlights, and the model's recall history. For used cars, AutoVantage not only provides estimated trade-in and selling pricing, but also an overview of the model, recall history, and tips to make you a better bargainer. You can even arrange to purchase your next car at a local dealer through AutoVantage--at an average savings, the club claims, of \$2,000.

If, heaven forbid, your new set of wheels starts giving you trouble, AutoVantage again comes to the rescue. Members get discounts on repairs, as well as tune-ups and regular maintenance, at participating auto shops, including Goodyear, Firestone, K-Mart, Maaco, and AAMCO Transmission Centers. (A list of discount service centers within 50 miles is available **online**.) Your membership also entitles you to discounts on selected products to spiff up your car, such as car stereos, radar detectors, C.B. radios, and car alarms.

Auto Info Center

Knowing all too well that new cars start depreciating the instant you drive off the lot, you may decide that only a "pre-owned" car will do. Several of the aforementioned services, as noted, include used-car data, but the **online** specialist is the Auto Info Center on CompuServe (Go Ai). Here, the detailed valuation **reports** cover not only the basics, but also how much to add or subtract for options ranging from power locks to tilt wheels. You'll get a chart that lets you adjust the value for a wide

spectrum of different odometer readings. And every figure comes in threes: one number each for dealer wholesale (from one dealer to another), private party (from one ordinary Joe to another), and dealer retail (from the dealer to you) price. **Reports** cost \$5.95 each and are sent within 24 hours by CompuServe Mail.

You can also tap a car-payment calculator, a recall-history databank, and some sound advice on shopping for a used car. (Don't shop evenings or weekends at a used-car dealership, for example. Do shop at the end of the month and end of the year, when pressure from sales contests and performance competition will squeeze the price in your favor.)

In short, **online** services let you do almost everything but kick the tires, and make buying a car almost as easy as clicking on your modem and dialing. Now if only I could train my modem to "fill her up."

David A. Fryxell, a frequent Link-Up contributor, is the editor of Milwaukee Magazine.

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Company Names: CompuServe Inc.--Information services

Industry Codes/Names: CMPT Computers and Office Automation

Descriptors: Automobiles--Purchasing; Information storage and retrieval systems-- Economic aspects

Product/Industry Names: 7375 Information retrieval services; 5012 Automobiles and other motor vehicles

File Segment: TI File 148

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Dynamic Search: Gale Group Trade & Industry Database(TM)

Records for: **online and consumer and reports**

save as alert...

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Output	Format: Full Record	Output as: Browser	display / send
Modify	refine search		back to picklist

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Records 76 of 444 In full Format

☐ 76. 15/9/76

05911571 Supplier Number: 12439555 (THIS IS THE FULL TEXT)

Join the information economy. (American Information Exchange online information service is the brainchild of Phil Salin) (The Computer-Aided Engineer.)

Orr, Joel N., Dr.

Computer-Aided Engineering , v11 , n4 , p84(1)

April , 1992

ISSN: 0733-3536

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Abstract: The American Information Exchange (AMIX), an **online** information service to be released in mid-1992, will give users access to a wide variety of products and services in addition to comments on their value. The available products include text, software, graphics and sound files while writing, editing, research and consulting are among the many services offered. An important feature of AMIX is that users may then submit testimonials on the product or service purchased to further inform future potential buyers. In this way, worthwhile goods are promoted while those of less value are not. AMIX also helps the sellers to establish a reputation without spending enormous amounts on advertising, since a quality product will sell itself through testimonials. Payment is made through AMIX, which takes a percentage, and all parties agree to settle disputes through binding arbitration.

Text:

You've heard of it, you may even believe in it--perhaps you have realized you are a part of it. Well, you now have a chance to see if it really works!

What I'm talking about is The Information Economy. You have invested years in acquiring information--you spend a significant part of your time reading trade publications, attending conferences and exhibits, and taking classes and seminars. The rest of your work time is spent applying what you've learned to what you do. What you wind up with is expertise--the result of applying prior and ongoing learning to your work experience, and learning from that.

But most experts accumulate far more expertise than they can market, because they are experts in their field--which is usually not marketing. A small fraction of them become consultants and make a living--or some fascimile thereof--selling their expertise. But even most professional

consultants are not good at marketing. Enter AMIX, the American Information Exchange.

5 AMIX is an on-line information market. People looking for answers dial into AMIX with their modems and move through a structured series of menus (facilitated considerably by hypertext links and intelligent local software in their PCs) to find products and services to meet their requirements. Products include text, graphics, software--even sound files. Some of the many kinds of services might be consulting, research, writing, editing--just about anything you can think of. If customers don't see what
10 they are looking for, they can post a request and take bids.

When a deal is made, and both parties agree, payment is taken care of through AMIX; the network takes a cut of each deal, which is the business it is in. Anyone who has bought something on AMIX can post a comment on the product, and anyone who has bought services can post a comment about the
15 consultant. It is this review facility, along with the fact that sellers actually get money, that makes AMIX a market, and not just a bulletin board.

AMIX buyers and sellers agree to settle differences through arbitration, so it is unlikely that controversies about deals or comments
20 will lead to expensive litigation.

What impresses me about AMIX is that it gives you a way to market your expertise, without changing your present employment. At a low cost, you can tell a rapidly growing number of prospects what you have to offer--and start increasing your income.

25 Say you attend a trade show. You write up your impressions in the light of your expertise and post the five-page document on AMIX, pricing it at \$25, two days after the show. Customers read your brief description. They can also read your bio and any comments posted by people who have bought things from you in the past. Finally, they make a decision: Is it
30 worth \$25 to get the very latest information as seen through the eyes of someone who knows the industry? A couple of happy customers seem to have thought so. The risk is minimal.

It is not extravagant to think that such a document might see 20 sales within a couple of weeks. Not a large sum, especially after deducting the AMIX commission, but it is more than you would have had otherwise.
35 Moreover, it helps to establish your reputation in the market; you can charge more for your next product, because your happy customers will have posted testimonials.

And what's more--unlike other markets, in which you have to keep
40 buying advertising to be remembered, your reputation on AMIX grows with time, as happy customers post their comments about your work and products. So it is the quality of your work, not the size of your advertising budget, that builds your reputation--and your income.

45 What will keep the existing on-line services--Compuserve, GENie, Dow Jones, MCI Mail, AT&T Mail, even Prodigy--from offering similar services? Nothing, I hope, for the sake of the user community. But in reality, these organizations tend to be rather rigid and unimaginative in their approach to the market. Most of them are probably unaware of AMIX right now; when they learn of it, they will probably wait to see if it shows signs of
50 succeeding. So I doubt we will see a similar service emerge within the next three years.

The concept is the brainchild of Phil Salin, a high-tech libertarian and information marketer par excellence, who died of cancer last year. Phil's wife, Gayle Pergamit, has kept AMIX going through its prolonged
55 gestation. A small team of talented software and marketing people in Palo Alto, CA, is now in the final contractions of labor; AMIX is about to be born.

Current markets focus principally on the computer industry and on programming. LEAP manages the newly established
60 engineering/AEC/manufacturing market on AMIX. In this area, buyers will find consulting services, educational and training services, special **reports** on shows and conventions, software and hardware product reviews, details on standards, actual software, and more. In time, markets such as **consumer** information, law, and medicine will be covered.

All you need to get on-line is a personal computer, a modem, a

telephone line, and the AMIX communication software. The 2400 bps (bits per second) modems cost \$60-\$300; many come with telecommunications software for other services--you'll use the AMIX software (cumbersome but essential) to access AMIX.

The Talmud says, "Who is wise? He who sees that which is being born." Wisdom dictates that you find out about AMIX. You can call them at 415/856-1234; LEAP members get a special discount when they register.

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Industry Codes/Names: CMPT Computers and Office Automation

Descriptors: Information services--Product introduction; Information industry--Product introduction

Product/Industry Names: 7375 Information retrieval services

Trade Names: American Information Exchange (**Online** information service)--Product introduction

File Segment: CD File 275

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<input type="radio"/>	S3 Sort S2/1-500/PD,D	1
<input type="radio"/>	S4 COMPUSERVE OR PRODIGY OR GENIE OR AOL published between 1988 and 1994	13701
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<input type="radio"/>	S10(ONLINE) AND (CONSUMER) AND (REPORTS) Combined with set 9 published between 1988 and 1993	0
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<input type="radio"/>	S14ONLINE AND CONSUMER AND REPORTS published between 1988 and 1992	444
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Search Form

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	Document ID	Title	Current OR
1	US 6208659 B1	Data processing system and method for providing personal information in a communication network	370/410
2	US 6199082 B1	Method for delivering separate design and content in a multimedia publishing system	707/522
3	US 6182142 B1	Distributed access management of information resources	709/229
4	US 6181336 B1	Database-independent, scalable, object-oriented architecture and API for managing digital multimedia assets	345/329
5	US 6169992 B1	Search engine for remote access to database management systems	707/103R
6	US 6161139 A	Administrative roles that govern access to administrative functions	709/225
7	US 6160551 A	Graphical user interface for displaying and manipulating objects	345/339
8	US 6158903 A	Apparatus and method for allowing computer systems with different input/output devices to collaboratively edit data	709/204
9	US 6154209 A	Graphical user interface with method and apparatus for interfacing to remote devices	345/339
10	US 6134540 A	System, method, and program for applying query rewrite technology to object building	707/2

	Inventor
1	Govindarajan, Rangaprasad , et al.
2	Ferrel, Patrick J. , et al.
3	Win, Teresa , et al.
4	Chiu, Sheng-Yang , et al.
5	Beall, Christopher W. , et al.
6	Win, Teresa , et al.
7	Naughton, Patrick J. , et al.
8	Schaeffer, Arnold , et al.
9	Naughton, Patrick J. , et al.
10	Carey, Michael J. , et al.

	Document ID	Title	Current OR
11	US 6122627 A	System, method, and program for object building in queries over object views	707/4
12	US 6115711 A	Method and apparatus for generating transactions and a dialog flow manager	707/10
13	US 6115710 A	Portable and dynamic distributed transaction management method	707/10
14	US 6112024 A	Development system providing methods for managing different versions of objects with a meta model	717/3
15	US 6112186 A	Distributed system for facilitating exchange of user information and opinion using automated collaborative filtering	705/10
16	US 6112190 A	Method and system for commercial credit analysis	705/38

	Inventor
11	Carey, Michael J. , et al.
12	White, John W.
13	White, John W.
14	Almond, Kenneth , et al.
15	Bergh, Christopher P. , et al.
16	Fletcher, Bruce Alan , et al.